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RURAL WOMEN IN CANADA - HOW LIKE OUR OWN THEY ARE!

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The delegates representing the State home demonstration councils, and a large number of other women from the United States who attended the Triennial Conference of the Associated Country Women of the World in Toronto, Canada, felt that it was a rare privilege to be there. We, felt at home, too, because we were visiting our friendly neighbor, Canada. We were impressed with the splendid organization of the conference itself, the efficiency evident in the planning and carrying out of the program, and all the various activities. For this we can acclaim largely the Federated Women's Institutes of Canada. Many remarked about the high esteem in which the Women's Institutes were held by Canadian Federal and Provincial Governments, and the civic and business interests of Toronto, all of which contributed toward the success of the conference.

In the States, all of us are proud to say that the experiences, training, and responsibilities home demonstration work has afforded to rural women through the years in the United States have developed leadership. Our rural women can take their place in the forums considering both rural and urban interests, with high commendation. Likewise, in Canada, the Women's Institutes are turned to for leadership in many educational and civic activities in thousands of communities. Most of us have had the opportunity to get better acquainted with some of the institute leaders and provincial home economic extension workers and have learned more about their progress and accomplishments. We can easily conclude that the Women's Institutes throughout the years have developed the kind of leadership that was necessary for the success of the Triennial Conference of the Associated Country Women of the World, which had worldwide representation and recognition.

Rural women in Canada have very much the same homemaking interests and problems as the rural women in the United States, hence the programs and activities of homemakers' organizations and groups are similar. There have been very helpful and pleasant exchange visits between Women's Institutes on the Canadian border and home demonstration groups in Vermont, Michigan, North Dakota, Montana, and the State of Washington.

THE WOMEN'S INSTITUTES SERVING THE NEEDS OF RURAL WOMEN

The 50th anniversary of the founding of the Women's Institutes of Canada was celebrated in 1947. This memorable event was not only recognized in Canada, but in many countries of the world where the Women's Institute movement has spread. The first institute was organized in the village of Stoney Creek, Wentworth County, Ontario, February 19, 1897. It was Mrs. Adelaide



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Hoodless, of Hamilton, Ontario, a woman of culture and influence, who inspired a large group of women in Stoney Creek to recognize the need of an organization for the women, similar to the Farmers' Institutes, which were meeting some of the needs of the farmers of that day. The purpose or objective of the first Women's Institute was to raise the standard of homemaking. Mrs. Hoodless led also in the movement that resulted in the establishment of Macdonald Institute at the Ontario Agricultural College, Guelph, which opened its first classes in home economics in 1903. Dr. Margaret S. McCready is the present principal of Macdonald Institute.

The early leaders worked hard in extending the organization to other communities in many counties in Ontario. By 1918 all the provinces of Canada except one had achieved a measure of organization of Women's Institutes or a kindred group. At present there are about 95,000 members in the groups affiliated in the Federated Women's Institutes of Canada. In Saskatchewan the groups are known as Homemakers Clubs, in Newfoundland and Labrador as Jubilee Guilds, and in the other eight provinces Women's Institutes. In French-speaking Quebec the institutes are referred to as Cercles de Fermieres of Quebec.

The Federated Women's Institutes of Canada correspond to our National Home Demonstration Council, and their annual meeting is made up of representatives from each Provincial Federation. The standing committees of the Canadian Federation consider home economics, citizenship, agriculture and Canadian industries, and cultural activities. The chairmen are called "conveners." In addition there are a publicity director and a letter friend secretary.

Mrs. W. J. Adams, of Ethelton, Saskatchewan, is the recently elected president of the Federated Women's Institutes of Canada. The Federation became the national organization in 1919 and has through the years exerted effective influence throughout Canada in promoting educational, moral, social, and economic measures in accordance with the objectives and programs set up by the Federation.

In the early days the Women's Institute met a social need of the women in isolated communities, and it does yet, because Canada has a large number of isolated rural areas. The spirit of pioneer neighborliness still exists, and the institutes afford an opportunity for friendly meetings and the exchange of ideas about common problems. Mrs. J. E. Houck, one of the present leaders, said at a central Ontario convention, that the institute was started as an adult education organization, and that is still its basic purpose. She said that programs should be planned so that members feel that the institute year has (a) been a year of definite accomplishment, (b) enriched their lives, (c) broadened vision, (d) helped solve their problems as wives, mothers, homemakers, and citizens, and (e) given a foundation on which to build for the future.

Through the years the program has expanded to meet the many needs and interests of rural women of today. Each institute has set up means of arriving at its own program for the year. In home economics, food and nutrition are basic subjects, with emphasis on freezing and canning, planning of balanced meals, Canada's food rules, large-quantity cookery, and well-planned



banquets, and community dinners. Clothing activities are popular, with trends toward more home sewing. Choosing and using different fabrics, selection of clothing and accessories, children's clothing, and dressmaking are among the present clothing projects. All phases of house furnishing and handicraft related to furnishings are emphasized in some programs. Health and safety in the home are essentials. Family relationships, including child training and juvenile delinquency problems, are increasingly being included in programs.

There are Junior Institutes for girls and young women in some of the provinces. It was in 1915 that the Women's Institutes in Ontario considered the feasibility of starting an organization for girls and young women 16 years of age and over, known as the Girls' Institute. By 1919 the organization had taken the name Junior Institute, and gradually grew in numbers and in scope of program, which changes to meet the varied interests of members. Each Junior Institute is encouraged to assume responsibility in planning and carrying out its program. In addition to programs relating to home interests and personal development, the Junior Institutes are active in various community enterprises.

#### EXTENSION SERVICES FOR HOMEMAKERS AND FOR GIRLS

Ontario is the second largest province and has the largest population of all the Canadian provinces. Ontario Department of Agriculture, Toronto, maintains Extension Services for women and girls under the Women's Institute Branch and Home Economics Service. Assistance in the following programs is available for adults: Food and nutrition, clothing and textiles, home crafts, home furnishings, health education, psychology for the homemaker, citizenship, cultural activities, and Women's Institute procedures. The last-mentioned topic includes how to be a good officer and an effective speaker, and how to conduct meetings. The services available for Homemaking Clubs for girls and young women are in the subjects of food, clothing, house furnishings, hospitality, gardening, health, and citizenship.

Twenty-two supervisors and home economic specialists of the Women's Institute Branch and Home Economics Service of the Ontario Department of Agriculture have headquarters in Toronto, and do field work throughout the Province. Miss Anna P. Lewis is the Director of the Women's Institute Branch and Home Economics Service. Miss Florence P. Eadie is Supervisor of Junior Extension in the Branch. Extension Services in the adult programs are available to the Women's Institutes and to all other organized women's groups in the Province of Ontario.

Upon request the Ontario Department of Agriculture provides a supervisor or specialist to give assistance to the group desiring help in a definite program. The institute or group receiving assistance makes all local plans, and takes care of publicity and any local expenses incident to the meetings. The Department makes some stipulations as to attendance desired and the number of sessions necessary for each program.



You are probably asking the question, Does Ontario have county extension agents? There are no county home economics extension agents directing the adult women's groups. The Agricultural Representatives Branch of the Ontario Department of Agriculture is made up of highly trained agricultural representatives located in each county and district in the Province. The agricultural representatives carry to the farmers information from the several branches in the Ontario Department of Agriculture, and direct agricultural clubs and Junior Farmers. The district and county home economists representing the Women's Institute Branch and Home Economics Services of the Ontario Department of Agriculture direct the Homemaking Clubs for rural girls and young women. At present Ontario has 18 district or county home economists covering the 44 counties of Ontario. They have headquarters at different points in the Province. These home economists train local leaders to assist with the clubs for girls and young women. The counties hold a county achievement day each year. The age for the Homemaking Clubs is 12 to 26. The county and district home economists also assist the Junior Institutes in planning and carrying out programs.

The Junior Extension office of the Women's Institute Branch and Home Economics Service has kits of program suggestions, and materials for loan to the Junior Institutes. These kits cover a variety of interesting subjects, of which the following are only a few: New Canadians in our midst, Know your Canada, Safety in our homes, Treats for your parties, Dollars and sense, Let's plant a garden, What to wear, What to read, How to conduct meetings and discussions.

In the other provinces similar but smaller home economics extension staffs are employed by the provincial departments of agriculture or the extension branch of the provincial university. These home economists assist adult and junior groups with their programs, upon request. Several provinces have already adopted the name "4-H Clubs" for their youth groups, and others are contemplating doing so.

#### PROMOTION OF HEALTH EDUCATION

The Women's Institutes are emphasizing the importance of education as a means of promoting better health in homes and communities. A wide range of health subjects have been studied. Health practices within the home have been considered by most institutes, such as safety in the home, first aid, home care of the sick, sickroom equipment, preventive measures, and nutrition in relation to health.

The institutes have given emphasis also to the need for better health services and medical facilities in some of the rural communities. Needs are considered, and through united effort, they work toward meeting the need. The institutes play an important part in all the health drives, for Red Cross, cancer relief, March of Dimes, and so forth. Preschool clinics have been the result of institute efforts in a number of communities.

Quebec is interested in a vigorous educational program leading toward legislation to enforce the compulsory pasteurization of milk for sale in the Province. The Quebec institutes are also assisting in the hot school



lunch program. Saskatchewan Federation passed a resolution at their convention in 1952, asking that complete medical examination for preschool-age children be included in their provincial health legislation. Nova Scotia institutes were instrumental in having cod-liver oil and fruit juices served to school children. British Columbia institutes have given support to athletic associations and have helped in establishing a hospital-home-school for crippled children. Prince Edward Island institutes have been instrumental in organizing a Childrens' Aid Society.

Health is a major interest of the Ontario Women's Institutes. In a large number of communities institute branches have made liberal financial contributions to the support of local hospitals, or purchased necessary equipment. One institute took on the sewing project for a new hospital by making up 3,000 yards of material into sheets, pillowcases, and hospital garments. Public authorities say that the institutes were largely responsible for the establishment of the Public Health Nursing Division in the Ontario Department of Health, and in one county the institutes succeeded in getting the Victorian Order Nursing Service to include rural areas as well as urban. This is a home-nursing service. The Canadian Mental Health Association gave the mental health award for 1953 to the Women's Institutes of Ontario for the splendid work they are doing in fostering programs on robust mental health, and in the "Penny Roundup" to provide funds for the preventive programs of the Canadian Mental Health Association.

#### AGRICULTURE AND CANADIAN INDUSTRIES

Soil conservation has been chosen as a subject for study in many institute branches in most of the provinces. As is said by one leader, it is natural for women to save treasures to be passed on to future generations. They have a share in cherishing our greatest asset, the soil. Lists and sources of information on soil conservation are made available. Talks are given by agricultural representatives, and films are used. Institutes in several provinces report giving assistance to fair boards or sponsoring agricultural or horticultural fairs. Tours to various industrial plants and to gardens are made. Beautification of roadways, school grounds, local parks, and home grounds come in for much attention. Every institute member is urged to plant a tree in 1954 for fruit, for beauty, for shelter, or as a home for Canadian wildlife.

The agricultural representatives correspond to our district and county agricultural agents. They cooperate with the organized groups of women who are considering weed control, prevention of forest fires, marketing problems, laws governing agriculture and Canadian industries, the sponsoring of agricultural clubs with boys and girls, farm accounts, cooperative organizations, and rural electrification.

#### HANDICRAFTS HAVE AN IMPORTANT PLACE IN THE LIVES OF PEOPLE

Provincial governments take an active interest in handicrafts. The Nova Scotia Department of Trade and Industry inaugurated the handicraft program



in 1943, and it has expanded until handicrafts are an integral part of the Province's economy. Instruction is given to those interested in learning a craft well enough to produce articles for home use or to sell. Instructors employed by the Provincial Government give instructions in weaving, spinning, leather tooling, wood carving, stone polishing, making of silver jewelry, and other crafts, to groups of six adults or more, upon request. Eight lessons are given within a 2-week period. A handicraft center, library service, and design service are maintained. Craftsmen-at-Work Exhibitions are held each year. Craftsmen's articles are never purchased by the Provincial Government, but an effort is made to place the buyer in contact with the producer. A booklet, handicraft in Nova Scotia, is published annually by the department of trade and industry. This is a directory of craftsmen producing to sell.

The Quebec Provincial Government has promoted a plan to keep 60,000 looms and 100,000 spinning wheels at work, designed to keep the farm women on the farms instead of swelling the exodus into cities. There are 1,000 or more circles of farm women, with about 35,000 members, who pay \$1 a year for membership. This dollar is matched by the Government, put into a fund for the purchase of looms, spinning wheels, garden seeds, and other things calculated to make the farm woman more interested in her home and its embellishments. The Provincial Department of Agriculture gives a grant on the purchase price of one loom to a Cercle de Fermiere or group. An effort is made to preserve some of the charming old French patterns.

Several of the other provincial departments of agriculture employ specialists in handicraft and home industries. The Federal Government appointed an Inter-Department Committee on Home Arts and Crafts which has planned craft exhibitions, and has made a national survey of handicrafts in Canada. A goodly number of well-selected handicraft articles from several provinces were on display at the Triennial Conference of the Associated Country Women of the World and attracted much attention.

#### COMMUNITY EFFORT RESULTS IN BENEFIT TO MANY

The Canadian Women's Institutes have a strong interest in the development of their communities. They have contributed finances and influence to many types of community service and welfare, which have benefited many. The Women's Institutes have helped to broaden the interests of rural people beyond the farm and home, and this in itself has encouraged more reading for all members of the family. Adequate library facilities do not exist in some of the more isolated communities. Through the years the Women's Institutes have established small community libraries or book collections, or have assisted in the development of the public libraries.

More recently the Alberta institutes gave a selection of good books to the Wesaskiwin Library as a memorial to one of the deceased institute leaders. The Alberta Institutes also subscribe for magazines for use in the schools and in Alberta communities. Manitoba institutes maintain an excellent exhibit of books which are made available in various centers. One institute branch in Ontario converted an old jail into a library some years ago, and has been improving the library service in the community ever since. In



counties in Ontario without county library travel service, the institutes made good use of books from the traveling library of the Department of Education, ordering as many as 40 boxes in one year. The Quebec Women's Institutes report there is a heavy demand for pamphlets from their loan library, as members are reading and studying as never before. They also give encouragement to the use of the McLennan Traveling Libraries of Macdonald College, located in Quebec.

The institutes of New Brunswick opened a home for aged members of the New Brunswick Institutes in 1953. A large house was purchased, renovated, and modernized. It is already filled to capacity, and plans are under way for an extension. The institutes of Prince Edward Island have been influential in getting a home for well old people established. County homes for the aged are being established in all sections of Ontario. The Women's Institutes are contributing toward making the homes more homelike. Radio-phonographs have been presented, subscriptions to magazines have been provided, and in some counties entertainments have been put on for the pleasure of those living in the homes.

Among the many community activities undertaken by Manitoba institutes have been the acquiring and maintaining of restrooms, sponsoring drama and music festivals, and building community halls and skating rinks. The institute on Prince Edward Island sponsors drama and music festivals.

For several years the institutes in Alberta have organized choirs. As many as 50 voices or more from all parts of Alberta have sung in choral groups at the district conferences.

The institutes of British Columbia have furnished a room in one of the women's residences of the University of British Columbia. Institutes of New Brunswick, Quebec, Saskatchewan, British Columbia, and other provinces have established scholarships for home economics students.

#### THE TWEEDSMUIR HISTORIES

Lady Tweedsmuir, the wife of the Governor-General of Canada, 1935-40, sensed the need of preserving Canadian local history for posterity. The older folks with knowledge of valuable history are passing on, historic sites are being forgotten, and old landmarks are disappearing. The Women's Institutes realize that Canadian history begins in their own communities, and are taking a keen interest in the responsibility of compiling Tweedsmuir village histories. They are compilations of local and township history featuring the settlements, pioneer families, industries, public enterprises, schools, churches, and collections of valuable records. In some communities local museums or antique exhibits are established. The valuable compilations are kept in safe places but are made available for those interested in historical research, or anyone wishing to review them. This project has won recognition in many ways. An award was made to the Federated Women's Institutes of Canada by the American Historical Society for what has been accomplished in this unique project.



Lady Tweedsmuir, who lives in England, continued to give encouragement to this project by awarding a silver trophy each biennium to the Women's Institutes of Canada for the best Tweedsmuir history book. In the Province of Ontario alone 733 Tweedsmuir history books or more have been compiled by the Women's Institute branches. The Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario recently passed a resolution that the Provincial Government set aside a certain sum for the preservation and marking of places of special historic significance in the development of Ontario.

During the meeting of the National Home Demonstration Council Executive Board at the home of the president, Miss Jennie Williams, on her ranch in northern Wyoming in 1953, we were invited to attend a countywide meeting and luncheon sponsored by the Sheridan County, (Wyo.) Home Demonstration Council in observance of National Home Demonstration Week. The leading feature of the program was a historical sketch of early settlement and Indian war days of that local area. This had been compiled by a Home Demonstration Club member or a pioneer family. Some of us remarked at the time that the compilation of local history by home demonstration groups could be a most interesting project. Several of the Tweedsmuir histories were on exhibit at the Triennial Conference of the Associated Country Women of the World, and we realized what a satisfaction such an accomplishment must have been for the particular institutes that compiled them.

The Tweedsmuir competitions include not only the histories but also a cultural project and handicrafts. These vary by bienniums. For 1951-53 the cultural project was an essay on The Rural Home, and because of the Associated Country Women of the World Triennial Conference the competition was extended internationally. The handicraft competition in Canada, 1951-53, was on a quilt, original in design, with other specific requirements.

#### CITIZENSHIP RESPONSIBILITIES RECEIVE ATTENTION

Rural women in Canada want to learn more about public affairs and to fulfill their responsibilities as citizens intelligently. Greater interest is being shown in what goes on in local, State, and National Government activities and public affairs, just as we find in our home demonstration groups.

The Canadian Department of Citizenship, in Ottawa, cooperates with the institutes in furnishing a new series of booklets including The Citizen as an Individual, The Citizen as a Community Member, The Citizen as a Member of the Nation, and The Citizen as a Member of the World Community. These have been very helpful in the preparation for discussions at institute meetings. The Canadian Citizenship Council, a national organization, also cooperates in all citizenship programs. Filmstrips are available for use with some of the booklets on citizenship, and a pageant entitled "Who Are the Canadians?" has been written. The Ten Steps to Canadian Citizenship is a booklet distributed to immigrants.

In 1950 the Canadian Parliament declared May 23 to be National Citizenship Day both for new Canadians and for native Canadians. Many of the programs center on giving encouragement to new Canadians in their Canadian



citizenship. In cooperation with other groups and the county or district judge, citizenship certificates have been presented at institute events in some counties on Citizenship Day. Programs featuring the "coming of age" of new citizens as well are presented.

We find in the citizenship reports of the past few years that different phases of the citizenship program are being carried out in the several provinces. In Nova Scotia the citizenship work is linked with legislation. Laws regarding succession duties, wills, and public health have been studied. The oath of allegiance and the New Citizenship Act are presented, and reforms in the school system are of timely interest. New Brunswick institutes have been interested in assisting displaced persons.

Ontario institutes encouraged groups to visit the legislature, welfare camps, and the juvenile court. They call attention to the need of cultivating friendly relations between urban and rural people. In Manitoba laws of special interest to women have been discussed by the Women's Institutes. Saskatchewan institutes are specially interested in the proposed new laws relating to Indians. Other topics discussed have been child welfare, penal reform, juvenile delinquency, and the Declaration of Human Rights. British Columbia is interested in the problems of the Indian population, and the institutes have assisted in training some of the Indian women in first aid, cooking, and crafts. Alberta has established a loan collection of papers, all pertinent to the topic of citizenship.

#### WORLD CITIZENSHIP

World citizenship is a term well known to the Women's Institutes. Mrs. Hugh Summers, the outgoing president of the Federated Women's Institutes of Canada, said that with the ever widening horizons of the institutes, they should feature understanding and peace between all peoples, going beyond "home and country" and remembering that we are citizens of the world. The words of Mrs. Raymond Sayre, president of Associated Country Women of the World, 1951-53, are frequently quoted in the institutes: "We need increased knowledge of other peoples, and understanding of their motives and desires, if we hope to attain unity and world citizenship."

The rural women of the United States and those of the many countries affiliated with the Associated Country Women of the World are proud of the splendid work of Mrs. Sayre in cementing the efforts and friendships of rural women throughout the world.

At the 1952 Quebec Provincial Convention of Women's Institutes the theme was New Era--New Effort. These ideas prevailed during the meeting, that we no longer live in the old orderly world--that we must adjust our thinking if we are to survive. Living in a new era, we must put forth new efforts.

International Days were often featured in the institutes in 1952 and 1953, inspired by the coming A. C. W. W. Triennial. Visitors from other lands were key speakers on the programs, and some institutes had public welcome programs to newcomers from other lands who were to make Canada their home. To make the newcomers feel at home they were featured in the



programs, during which they exhibited and told about native food, costumes, or handicraft, and entertained with native songs.

At the International Days, women were made conscious of "Pen Friends" as the most interesting way in which to learn about other countries and their customs. In 1951 alone Canada received 941 requests for Pen Friends.

It is reported that more UNICEF Christmas cards were purchased in Canada than in any other country. Many of the institutes have made special study of the organizations sponsored by the United Nations, such as FAO, UNESCO, and World Health Organization. The filmstrip United Nations at Work has been used extensively. True world neighborliness has been displayed by the contributions to flood relief for Britain and Holland, and the sending of bales of warm clothing and comforters to Korea for the needy. In Quebec one institute adopted a European child. One unusual act of kindness and generosity can be cited in gratefulness to the Women's Institutes of Ontario. The village of Mesovouno, Greece, was destroyed by the enemy in 1940, and men from 16 to 60 were shot. After years of exile the women, sons, and daughters have returned to cultivate the fields, without money, equipment, or tools. The Women's Institutes of Ontario sent a tractor, which was delivered in 1952 in time for the spring work.

Very recently the Federated Women's Institutes of Canada organized a new United Nations and Exchange Programs Committee, with Mrs. J. E. Houck as convener. The chief interests of the committee for the year will be the United Nations Children's Emergency Funds, and UNESCO coupon projects.

#### THE INTERNATIONAL PEACE GARDEN

All State Home Demonstration Councils in the United States are interested in the International Peace Garden, and a report on contributions and interest is made each year at the National Home Demonstration Council meeting and at the annual meeting of the Country Women's Council. We find a very active interest on the part of the Federated Women's Institutes of Canada. The idea originated in Canada in 1929 at a meeting of the International Association of Gardeners. The International Peace Garden, Incorporated, was formed. The site is near the geographical center of North America, at Rugby, N. Dak., on the Canada to Panama Highway. The area comprises 2,200 acres, 1,300 in Manitoba, Canada, and 900 in North Dakota, United States. On the cairn of native stone erected on the International Boundary between Manitoba and North Dakota is carved, "To God in His Glory. The two nations dedicate this garden, and pledge ourselves that as long as men shall live we shall not take up arms against one another." The Federal Government in both the United States and Canada has made appropriations toward the development of the International Peace Garden.

The Federated Women's Institutes of Canada was the first organization to offer assistance, and the first to have a share of 1 acre in the garden. The Federation's acre is designed into formal plots representing each of the Canadian provinces. Plants, shrubs, and trees have been selected to form a harmonious unit blending into the general garden scheme. For upkeep the federation of each province pays \$20 annually. A sundial has been placed.



Memorial picnic coves are to be established in another section of the garden in memory of the late Mrs. Alfred Watt, who served as president of the Associated Country Women of the World from its inception until 1948.

Elaborate plans are under way in the development of the Peace Garden. Several civic and women's organizations, in both Canada and the United States, have made contributions. The homemakers' organizations of Canada and the United States have assumed the cost of development and the maintenance of the areas north and south of the entrance roads. The Peace Garden symbolizes that two great neighbor nations can live and work together in harmony and understanding.

The following thought is kept before the members of the institutes, and can well be kept before all of us: "A garden is a lovely growing thing, just as peace is a vital expanding force which might be nurtured and cared for. Peace does not exist of its own accord, but through a conscious effort to develop and maintain understanding and tolerance. This garden to be a real International Peace Garden must be in the hearts and minds of all people. Institute members must contribute to its creation and maintenance. They must visit it and remember always why it has been established." It is hoped that thousands of home demonstration club members may find it possible to visit the International Peace Garden and that home demonstration groups throughout the United States will continue to assist in the development of the Garden as one means of commemorating a century of peace which has existed between two great countries, Canada and the United States.

1. The first of the three main points is that the Government should be more active in the field of social welfare. This is particularly true in the case of the elderly and the infirm.

2. The second point is that the Government should be more active in the field of education. This is particularly true in the case of the young and the uneducated.

3. The third point is that the Government should be more active in the field of health. This is particularly true in the case of the sick and the disabled.

